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# English liberalism in Catalonia at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Manuel Casamada i Comella<sup>1</sup>

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## abstract

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the literati and writers of the Spanish capital were divided in conservative and progressive factions and this ideological polarization was reflected in the literature. While the conservatives adopted the French aesthete Charles Batteux's *Principes de la littérature* (1774), the more progressive thinkers modelled their production on Scottish minister Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783). Their use of Blair's treatise reflects one way in which liberal English thought was being introduced in Spain and it also helped to more widely disseminate the ideas contained in Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), a work of particular interest because it re-examined what had hitherto been regarded as two inseparable concepts. In Catalonia, Hugh Blair's influence is seen in the writings of the liberal friar Manuel Casamada (1772–1841) and in the unpublished speech Casamada delivered at the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona in 1837.

## key words

Hugh Blair, Manuel Casamada, the beautiful, the sublime, Catalan aesthetics.

In the period under discussion, the ideas of the English Enlightenment were gradually gaining ground in Europe. In the art of discourse and in literary theory, this expansion was visible in the presence of translations of certain Eng-

<sup>1</sup> This article forms part of the research project “L'escola estètica catalana y sus aportaciones a la estética española (1800–1936)” (“The Catalan school of aesthetics and its contributions to Spanish aesthetics”), conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy, Ramon Llull University, and financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, FFI2009-07158. I would like to thank Professor Xavier Serra Labrado for his reading of the original and his intelligent suggestions.

lish works and in the active role these new ideas played in the struggle between two camps of thought: one that recognized tradition and one that had become uneasy with the tenets of scholasticism. Already in the eighteenth century, there were notable tensions in Spain between these two groups, with the scholastics defending a traditional orthodoxy and the liberal thinkers recognizing in the winds of social change the need for a new approach to rhetoric and literature. In the humanities, four central figures of the age who were especially notable for their balance of tradition with the new ideas were Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, Gregori Mayans, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and Antoni de Campmany.

By and large, however, the textbooks on rhetoric and literature circulating in Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century reveal the presence of an unresolved conflict. Choosing one textbook over another also meant choosing the school of thought behind it, embracing that school's ideas on literary theory and flying its particular ideological and political flag. With regard to the books themselves, Don Paul Abbott has observed<sup>2</sup> that Jovellanos's *Curso de humanidades castellanas* ('Course in Castilian humanities')—which includes "*Lecciones de Retórica y Poética*" ('Lectures in Rhetoric and Poetics')—is the first Spanish work to reveal the influence of the Scottish minister and public speaker Hugh Blair<sup>3</sup>. Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* had been used to educate different generations of writers in the English-speaking world and, through translation, it gained considerable influence on writers and thinkers across Europe. The book was published in over one hundred editions and abridgements, and eventually translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian. It became compulsory reading in a number of study programmes, starting with the University of Salamanca following that institution's liberal reform in 1807, then in the literature and history programmes of the Royal Studium of St. Isidore of the Imperial College of Madrid<sup>4</sup>.

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2 "The influence of Blair's *Lectures* in Spain", *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* VII, 3, Summer 1989, 275–289. Cf. Don Abbott, "Blair 'Abroad'". The European Reception of the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*", in Lynée Lewis Gaillet, *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences*, New Jersey: Hermagoras Press, 1998, p. 67–78.

3 Hugh Blair (1718–1800) is considered to be one of the most important theorists on the art of discourse. His three main works are: *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal* (1763); *Sermons* (5 volumes, 1777–1801); and *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783). The last work, one of the subjects of discussion in this paper, was translated into Spanish in either its full form or abridged versions several times, of which the translation and adaptation by José Luis Munárriz is particularly notable: *Lecciones sobre la Retórica y las bellas artes, traducidas y adicionadas a partir del original inglés de Hugh Blair* (4 volumes, Madrid: Antonio Cruzado printers, 1798–1801). This translation of Blair's work was officially recognized and used until the year 1825, when it was replaced by José Gómez Hermosilla's *Arte de hablar en prosa y verso* (2 volumes, Madrid: the Royal Press, 1826).

and, in 1820, in the subject of rhetoric recommended by the Spanish government for the teaching of humanities and theology<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the *Lectures* were also the principle source for two other official works used in the study of the humanities: *Principios de retórica y poética* ('Principles of rhetoric and poetics') by Francisco Sánchez Barbero (1805)<sup>6</sup>, and *Arte de hablar en prosa y verso* ('The Art of speech in prose and poetry') by José Gómez Hermosilla.

## Blair against Batteaux

The Spanish translation of Blair's *Lectures* by José Luís Munárriz (see Footnote 3 above) was a milestone in Spanish liberal thought<sup>7</sup>, although it should also be noted that first, Munárriz actually replaced Lectures xiv and xx in Blair's original with sections on the critical examination of style in Cervantes, and that second, he also added a section on epic Castilian poems –the new Lecture XLII– as well as appendices on Spanish literature.

Checa<sup>8</sup> proposes that Munárriz translated Blair on Jovellanos's recommendation. Either way, the translation became an important book of reference for a group of liberal literati gathered around the central figure of Manuel José Quintana. And in the same period, opposing Blair's text with the Spanish translation of Charles Batteux's *Principes de la Littérature*, we find a group of

5 This was decreed by Royal Order 20/09/1820. Abbott (*op. cit.*, p. 284) observes that "*Arte de hablar* [by Gómez Hemosilla] replaced Munarriz's *Lecciones de Blair* as the humanities textbook officially approved by the Consejo de Castilla" and adds in a footnote that "at the time of this decision, Hermosilla held the position of *Secretario de la Inspección General de Instrucción Pública*." In Gómez Hermosilla's text, with an editorial footnote written in 1826, it is explained that by Royal Order 19/12/1825 the work was to be studied by humanities scholars. But even then, Blair's text continued to be present in the lecture halls and, along with the poetics of Sánchez Barbero, it was even included in Alfredo Adolfo Camus's *Curso elemental de retórica y poética*, a textbook recognized by the Council for Public Education and present in the educational programmes for the years 1850 (*Gazeta de Madrid*, 28/09/1850), 1851 (*GdM*, 05/09/1851), 1852 (*GdM*, 19/02/1852), 1854 (*GdM*, 18/10/1854), 1855 (*GdM*, 14/10/1855), 1856 (*GdM*, 18/09/1856), 1861 (*GdM*, 27/09/1861), 1864 (*GdM*, 03/09/1864) and finally 1867 (*GdM*, 16/09/1867).

6 Cf. María José Sánchez de León, "Los principios de Retórica y poética de Francisco Sánchez Barbero en el contexto de la preceptiva de la época", *Lectures from the 10th Congress of the International Association of Hispanists*, Barcelona, 1992, vol. 2, p. 1439–1450.

7 Don Paul Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

8 José Checa Beltran, *Razones del buen gusto: poética española del neoclasicismo*, Madrid: CSIC, 1998, p.134. Cf. Andrés Soria Olmedo, *op. cit.*, p. 363–368.

conservative thinkers, championed by Leandro Fernández Moratín<sup>9</sup>. The literature shows that there was a long history of enmity between the two groups and that their exchanges were fierce and unforgiving – something intimated, for example, in the words of Moratín’s friend Juan Tineo Rodríguez when he describes Munárriz’s translation as “a classic work of the new school written according to the new poetic doctrine of the *andreses*, which shows just how awful the translation is”<sup>10</sup>.

In *Recuerdos de un anciano* (‘Memoirs of an old man’), Antonio Alcalá Galiano remembers the antagonism that existed between these two groups in the following words: “Around the time of 1806, literature in Madrid was divided in what were practically two opposing military camps [...]. One received the government’s patronage or, more properly speaking, was ruled by the Prince of the Peace<sup>11</sup> backed by a series of men – military officers, in effect – who had declared their undying allegiance to him. The main figure here was Leandro Fernández Moratín, distinguished as a comic poet if not as a man of creative talent or fervour [...], an outspoken critic of liberalism who enjoyed close ties with those in authority, even with the authorities of that period [...]. The opposing camp contained men who had already made a name for themselves [...]. They took the ideas of the eighteenth-century French philosophers and of the revolution of those people who were our neighbours [...]. In literature, the classicism of the men in this second camp was less pure than the classicism of their adversaries and while those in the first remained loyal to the orthodoxy of Boileau and Racine, the others allied themselves to the semi-heretics of the days of Voltaire. Whether or not he was actually credited with it, the driving force in this second literary camp was Manuel José Quintana. [...] Both bands defended a kind of bible of their faith, or to be more precise, a book that declared their doctrines and offered satisfaction in their application. Moratín’s camp took Batteux’s literary principles while Quintana’s took the Scotsman Hugh Blair’s lectures on rhetoric and poetics.”<sup>12</sup>

9 For further details and an analysis of the translation, see Inmaculada Urzinkui, “Batteu español” in Francisco Lafarga (ed.), *Imágenes de la Francia en las letras hispánicas*, Barcelona: PPU, 1989.

10 The editor of *Juicio Crítico de los principales poetas españoles de la última era. Obra póstuma de Don José Gómez Hermosilla a que saca luz Don Vicente Salvá. Librería de Mallen y sobrinos* (València, 1840, vol. 1) attaches a foreword written by Juan Tineo to the selection of Juan Meléndez Valdés’s poems. The citation comes from that foreword (page 184).

11 The title given to the statesman Manuel Godoy for having negotiated the Peace of Basel with France in 1795.

12 Antonio Alcalá Galiano, *Recuerdos de un anciano*, Madrid: Imprenta Central, 1878, p. 63–67. Alcalá returns to this subject in the book *Historia de la literatura española, francesa, inglesa e ital-*

As Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo has observed, in many ways the divisions described above were not limited to Madrid but extended across the Spanish state. This, he says, “would explain the curious fact that all those individual voices in Spain that called for greater breadth and elevation in poetic thought and greater freedom in lyrical form also happened to be outspoken defenders of Blair – men like Cienfuegos, Quintana or, to some extent, Lista”<sup>13</sup>. But what of Catalonia? It might be argued that there is still no research to suggest that such ideological divisions were experienced as fiercely in Catalonia as they were in Madrid, and there are certainly few studies on Blair’s influence in Catalonia or the use of his ideas there for ideological ends. But what we do have is one figure whose work is clearly representative of Blair’s presence in Barcelona, and that is Manuel Casamada i Comella.

## Manuel Casamada i Comella

Manuel Casamada was born in Barcelona on 9 September 1772<sup>14</sup>. His family was well-to-do and at the age of fifteen Casamada entered Barcelona’s School

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*iana en el siglo XVIII. Lecciones pronunciadas en el Ateneo de Madrid*, Madrid: Printing Press of the Literary and Typographic Society, 1845, p. 436–465.

- 13 Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*, Madrid: CSIC, 1994, vol. 1, p. 1160. Pages earlier, he had observed that “the group which was led by Quintana and Cienfuegos and which represented the vanguard of the Salamanca School and its powerful encyclopedic and revolutionary spirit adopted Blair’s *Lectures*, in the supplementary texts of which Quintana, Cienfuegos, Sánchez Barbero and others had participated. In a spirit of antagonism, Quintana’s adversaries led by Moratín the son supported the unlucky translator of Batteux, although their support amounted to nothing more than their criticisms of the Blair translation, which indeed fully deserved such treatment; in fact both translations did, Batteux’s like Blair’s being awful examples in a century of bad translations.” (*Ibidem*, p. 1159).
- 14 For a biography of Casamada, see *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, vol. XII, published by Espasa-Calpe, Madrid. Josep Rafel Carreras Bullbena, “Estudis biogràfics d’alguns benemèrits patricis que il·lustren aquesta Acadèmia”, *Bulletin of the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona* 13 (1928), No. 100–101, p. 377–379. Juan Corominas, *Suplemento a las Memorias para ayudar a formar un diccionario crítico de los escritores catalanes, y dar alguna idea de la antigua y moderna literatura de Cataluña, que en 1836 publicó el excmo. e ilmo. Señor Don Félix Torres Amat...* Burgos: Aranz Printers, 1849, p. 73. Guillem Díaz-Plaja, “Una cátedra de retórica, 1822–1835”, *Bulletin of the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona*, 1962. Faustino D. Gazulla, “Los mercedarios en la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona”, *Bulletin of the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona* 14 (1930), No. 103, p. 125. José Antonio Garí y Siumell, *Biblioteca mercedaria, o sea escritores de la celeste, real y militar orden de la merced, redención de cautivos*, Barcelona: Imprenta de los herederos de la viuda Pla, 1875, p. 59–60. Antonio Elías de Molins, *Diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de escritores y artistas catalana del siglo XIX*, Barcelona, 1889. Alfredo Sáez-Rico, *La educación general en Cataluña durante el trienio constitucional*, Barcelona: Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of Barcelona, 1973, p. 131–136. Félix Torres

and Convent of St. Peter Nolasco of the Order of Mercedarians<sup>15</sup>, where he studied and was ordained a priest. During the years 1792–1795, the subjects he studied are listed as Principles of religion, Theological institutions, Writing, Morality, and Biblical canon, and in 1798 he obtained his doctorate in theology. The record of Casamada's role as *rhetor* or mediator in a theological debate between two Mercedarian students in 1799<sup>16</sup> shows that in this year he lived in the Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy in the city of Vic. He probably continued living there until the invasion of Vic by the French army in 1808, holding the position of convent administrator, and he is also recorded as having been a member of the administrative board responsible for the city's defence<sup>17</sup>. In later years, Casamada was also regent of studies of his old school, St. Peter Nolasco of Barcelona, and as the literature shows, he was also its rector in 1815. He acted as synodal examiner of Girona and general director of studies of the Order of the Mercedarians for Catalonia. On 30 March 1815, he was appointed to the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona.

On 25 October 1820, Ferdinand VII of Spain ratified by royal decree the ecclesiastical reform law which shut down monasteries, reduced the number of convents of male orders and forbade further ordinations to the priesthood. Articles 13, 14 and 15 of the decree encouraged the secularization of the regular clergy<sup>18</sup>. Four months after it came into force, on 16 February 1821,

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Amat, *Memorias para ayudar a formar un diccionario crítico de los escritores catalanes, y dar alguna idea de la literatura de Cataluña*, Barcelona: J. Verdaguer Press, 1836, p. 166.

- 15 The School was open from 1642 to 1827 and was located at the bottom of Barcelona's main thoroughfare, the Rambles, near Ste. Monica. When Casamada became its regent, at the end of the Peninsular War of 1808–1814 (the *Guerra del Francès*), it had been occupied by the army. Between 1820 and 1823, when the School was also a convent, it was used by the police as a military barracks (as it had been at the beginning of 1809). Cf. Cayetano Barraquer Roviralta, *Las casas de religiosos en Cataluña durante el primer tercio del siglo XIX*, Barcelona: F.J. Altés y Alabat Press, 1906, vol II, p. 131–134. For the School's exact location, see [www.monestirs.cat/monst/bcn/bn02nola.htm](http://www.monestirs.cat/monst/bcn/bn02nola.htm) (25/08/2011).
- 16 *Sacrae religionis dogmata questionibus scholasticis ac historicis adornata quae publicae exponunt arenae Fr. Cosmas Lupresti et Bruguera et Fr. Petrus Nolasco Jaques et Artigas reg. Ac milit. Ord. B. M. De Mercede redemptionis captivorum, medius inter ipsos erit P. Fr. Emmanuel Casamada et Comellas in praedicto Ordine Sacrae Theologiae Lector. Circo locum parabit reg. Vicens. Templum S. Eulaliae V. et M. die II Junii anni a nat. Domini MDCCXCIX... Vici in offic. Mariae Dorca Viudae, eam regente Joanne Dorca.*
- 17 Miquel Furriols, "La junta corregimental de Vich en la guerra de la independencia", *Ausa* 2 (1955), No. 12, p. 67–79. Id., "Els patriotes vigatans durant la guerra napoleònica" *Ausa* 3 (1963), No. 44, p. 374–376. Maties Ramisa i Verdaguer, "Aspectes de la guerra del francès a Vic (1808–1814)", *Ausa* 11 (1984), No. 110–111, p. 239–249.
- 18 *Gazeta del Gobierno*, No. 123, of 29/10/1820, p. 544. Article 14 of the Decree: "When it so deems, the Nation shall bestow upon all those clerics ordained *in sacris* who determine to

Manuel Casamada presented to Bishop of Barcelona Pau Schar his request to leave the Order of Mercedarians. The bishop approved this request five days later and it was made effective on 16 April 1821. Casamada left the Order and, as a secular priest, came under the authority of the diocese.

During the three years of liberal Spanish government known as the Liberal Triennium (1820–1823), Casamada was one of the members of faculty who participated in the first attempt to restore the institution of the University of Barcelona. At this time he was teaching the subject of Literature and History, which was financed by the city council. He then went on to teach as professor at the Theological College of Barcelona where, after examinations and the validation of the studies he had completed at St. Peter Nolasco, he received on 3 May 1823 his *licentia* in Theology and, on 19 June, his doctoral degree<sup>19</sup>. After Ferdinand's absolute power had been reinstated, Casamada was appointed substitute Chair of Theology at the University of Barcelona, which meant that he could lecture but only if the faculty decided that a sufficient number of students had enrolled<sup>20</sup>. The documents testifying to this condition of employment would suggest that for ideological reasons certain decisions had been made at a higher level and behind the scenes to hold Casamada back from full professional activity: at the beginning of January 1839 he asked the University for the status normally reserved for tenured faculty, which would allow him the right to vote in the faculty senate; but just before the end of the same month and even though they praised his teaching ability, the authorities denied him this status, first with the argument that faculty who had come to Barcelona from the defunct University of Cervera and from the *Estudis Generals* of Barcelona had priority in making such requests and second, with the observation that his subject, theology, was not even one of the subjects in the curricula of those institutions<sup>21</sup>. At the same time, Casamada taught Latin language and culture at

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leave their religious order the sum of 100 ducats, which these persons shall enjoy until the moment they obtain some other form of clerical recompense or income by which to subsist.”

19 The source is transcribed at Antonio Palomeque Torres, *El trienio constitucional en Barcelona y la instauración de la Universidad de 2ª i 3ª enseñanza*, Barcelona: Faculty of Philosophy, University of Barcelona, 1970, p. 199 and 202, respectively.

20 An internal report of the University from November 1837 records the information thus: “Only five students are enrolled in the subject of Theology and we shall therefore only need one professor; however, when considered convenient, *Don Manuel Casamada* shall teach on a temporary basis ...” Document transcribed in Antonio Palomeque Torres, *Los estudios universitarios en Cataluña bajo la reacción absolutista y el triunfo liberal hasta la reforma de Pidal (1824–1845)*, Barcelona: Faculty of Philosophy, University of Barcelona, 1974, p. 261.

21 Antonio Palomeque Torres, *Los estudios universitarios en Cataluña...* p. 393–399.



the Josep Carreras School of Barcelona<sup>22</sup>. On 20 January 1838, at the age of 66, he was admitted as a student to the Faculty of Law and began studies in law, although there is no record of him having completed a law degree.

Casamada was a liberal friar. As the titles and content of some of his sermons indicate, he defended liberal thought, supported his queen, condemned absolutist oppression and the French occupation and stood by the Constitution<sup>23</sup>. He took part in novenas conducted exclusively by liberal priests<sup>24</sup>. He was officially assigned the task of writing and delivering a sermon for Barcelona's constitutional city council on 9 September 1822, which celebrated the failure of the Royal Guard to overthrow the Constitution in Madrid<sup>25</sup>. He gave a public address

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22 “[Manuel] Milá [i Fontanals] was taken by his father to the school of *Don* José Carreras, which was at that time a primary school, recently opened in this city (...) Together there we studied two years of Latin as the pupils of *Don* Manuel Casamada, a cleric who had left his Order and a man who treated us all and especially Milá with the personable kindness of a father.” Joaquim Rubió i Ors, *Noticia de la vida y escritos de D. Manuel Milá y Fontanals*, Barcelona: Jaime Jepsús Roviralta, 1887, p. 10–11.

23 Against those who wished to abolish the Constitution of the Cadiz *Cortes* and in his sermon of 1820 *Tributo de gratitud á las víctimas del Dos de Mayo de 1808...* (“In Gratitude to the Victims of the Second of May of 1808...”), Casamada wrote: “You wretched men who, bound in slavery or in selfishness, thus speak so foolishly against the Holy Word; you who forswear sacred religion were the murderers of Lacy, Porlier, Mina and their kind; you who hoodwinked the unsuspecting Ferdinand and placed your own convenience before the common good, up and be gone from our lives... But reflect before this and take care not to carry with you the contemptible legacy of your ignorance. Know first that the beautiful articles of our wise Constitution were drawn from the ancient beginnings of our legislation; that they embrace the precepts and discipline of the Church and observe the spirit of our Monarchy in its Catholic and political essence. Know, and let it be known across the Nation and the world beyond, that the *Cortes* did nothing more than uncover from the dust and ruins those same laws that in centuries past led Spain to the height of its glory and splendour.” (p. 17)

24 Gayetà Barraquer records this note written by Fray Francesc Pi, Father Superior of the Convent of Ste. Clare of Barcelona: “In the year 1822: the novena held by some liberal devotees for consecration to Our Lady of the Rosary in her church of Ste. Catherine of the Dominican Fathers in order to ensure that our constitutional arms might serve the purpose for which they were best intended.” Cayetano Barraquer Roviralta, *Los religiosos en Cataluña durante la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, Barcelona: Francisco J. Altés y Alabat Press, 1915, vol 1, p. 960–961.

25 In the sermon *El imperio de las leyes sostenido y afianzado por las víctimas del 7 de julio de 1823 en Madrid; elogio fúnebre, que en las solemnes esequias celebradas por el escelentísimo ayuntamiento constitucional de Barcelona el día 29 de Agosto de 1822 dijo (...) Manuel Casamada...* (“The Kingdom of Laws Sustained and Defended by the Victims of the Seventh of July of 1823 in Madrid: Funeral elegy delivered by [...] Manuel Casamada on the solemn occasion of the order of Christian funerals celebrated by the Most Excellent Constitutional City Council of Barcelona on the 29 of August of 1822...”), Casamada wrote as follows: “What a substantial and striking contrast can be found between the behaviour of the Spanish people and the behaviour of those vile agents of despotism! The former display constancy and suffering in their readiness to shed blood to defend the laws of their homeland, and are thus endowed with a



supporting the restoration of the Constitution of 1812<sup>26</sup>; and on occasions, he even assumed responsibilities of a political nature<sup>27</sup>. As a member of the reading room the *Gabinet de Lectura de Barcelona* and together with *Gabinet* associates Albert Pujol and Eudald Jaumeandre, Casamada defended what might be described as a liberal form of *moderantismo*, the Spanish movement that commanded a certain influence in Barcelona during the Liberal Triennium, most effectively from the *Gabinet* itself. Casamada also joined ranks with Bonaventura Carles Aribau to write the opinions of this circle of thinkers in the newspaper *Diario de la ciudad de Barcelona o sea El Eco de la ley*<sup>28</sup>. And there are further examples of his liberalism. Dr Roca Vernet describes Casamada's involvement in two different secret societies which flourished during the Liberal Triennium, the Society of the Ring and the Society of the *Comuneros*, and he also observes Casamada's activity in the *Gabinet*, his work as the director of the Civic School of Barcelona (see Footnote 27 above) and his presence at the meetings of the *Tertúlia Patriòtica de Lacy*, a gathering of thinkers dedicated to the discussion of ideas, named in honour of the Spanish war hero Luis Roberto de Lacy and an important source of radical political thought in Barcelona during this period<sup>29</sup>.

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heroic nature quite uncommon in the annals of history; the latter, meanwhile, are capable of nothing but the ferocious and bloodthirsty persecution of crimes and misdemeanours, which they conduct with unparalleled shamelessness." (p. 11)

26 Jordi Roca Vernet, "La sociabilidad del trienio liberal en Barcelona: foros de educación política y de adoctrinamiento constitucional", in Marieta Cantos Casenave (ed.), *Redes y espacios de opinión pública: de la ilustración al Romanticismo: Cádiz, América y Europa ante la modernidad*, Cadiz: University of Cadiz – Alienta, 2006: "The Dramatic Society was a company of actors who performed on the stages of Barcelona. In April 1820, they participated in the celebration of the restoration of the Constitution of 1812 by organizing a formal thanksgiving ceremony, to which they invited Prior Manuel Casamada, supporter of the liberal cause, to deliver a sermon. Months later, the Society also financed the publication of this sermon. In it, Casamada appealed to the King's good sense to respect the country's constitutional laws as the fundamental political means by which the rights of men and their happiness might be protected. And he called upon the Spanish people to practise virtue, the quality he believed should characterize the new social order." (p. 489–490)

27 "[Casamada] was appointed head of the Civic School of Barcelona [the charitable institution dedicated to the education of the poor, of the blind and of the deaf and dumb] to foil any attempt at re-establishing that space of political indoctrination of the militia". Jordi Roca Vernet, *Política, liberalisme i revolució. Barcelona, 1820–1823*. Doctoral thesis, Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), 2007, p. 162. Note that Dr Roca Vernet's thesis provides invaluable research on the various events that took place in during the period of the Liberal Triennium and is especially important in its examination of secret societies and civic movements.

28 The newspaper was first published on 1 May 1822. After the events of September of that year the newspaper adopted a more radical position and Casamada stopped contributing to it, as did Aribau.

29 Cf. Jordi Roca Vernet, *Política, liberalisme i revolució. Barcelona, 1820–1823*, UAB thesis, 2007.

In the words of Gaspar Feliu, at the height of the period in which liberal thought dominated public activity Casamada became “the most sought after preacher for sermons containing political comment”<sup>30</sup> and his militancy led to confrontations with other clerics. “Before arms were actually taken up,” Feliu continues, “the real battlefields were the pulpits and printing houses. The first attack was launched by Father Aragonès [...] when on one occasion he took from the *Diario de Barcelona* the example of two sermons delivered the day before and heavily criticized these (one was certainly Father Manuel Casamada’s)”<sup>31</sup>. Another religious figure involved in the controversies was the Servite friar Martí Estaper, arrested at the foot of his own pulpit and sent into exile for six years for the gravity of his attacks against the Constitution. During the last months of 1822, the parishes of Barcelona were subject to administrative reorganization and, as Feliu observes, passed into the hands of those lay clerics who had declared their allegiance to the liberal regime<sup>32</sup>. At this point, Casamada was instituted to the parish of the Virgin of Mercy<sup>33</sup>.

In the years following the Liberal Triennium and at the beginning of what came to be known as the Ominous Decade, Casamada was sentenced by the Bishop of Barcelona to confinement in the Mercedarian convent of St. Raymond Nonnatus, in the Catalan administrative division of Segarra. However, Gaietà Barraquer has observed that Casamada was already back in Barcelona delivering sermons in 1827<sup>34</sup>, which suggests that if he was actually sent to Segarra, it was not for long.

Casamada was also prominent as an educationalist. On 21 August 1821, a few months after he had left the Order of Mercedarians and was finding ways to perform his new pastoral role, the newspaper the *Diario Constitucional, político y mercantil de Barcelona* announced the opening of a private humanities school to be directed by him<sup>35</sup>. Unfortunately, around this time Barcelona also suffered

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30 *Op. cit.*, p. 126

31 *Op. cit.*, p. 153

32 Gaspar Feliu i Montfort, *La clerecia catalana durant el trienni liberal*, Barcelona: IEC, 1972, p. 99–100.

33 Cf. the magnificent study by Joan Barda, *L'església de Barcelona en la crisi de l'antic règim (1808–1833)*, Barcelona: Faculty of Theology of Barcelona / Herder, 1986, p. 121.

34 *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 1033.

35 Pages 3 and 4 of the Madrid newspaper *El Universal* carried the advertisement and added this sentence: “Make many and varied the means for our learning and liberal ideas shall become a necessity for all those who have the good fortune to belong to this magnanimous nation.” 30/08/1821, p. 931.

an outbreak of yellow fever, which set back Casamada's plans. One of the outbreak's victims was Father Joaquim Català, founder of the Civic School of Barcelona, who died in 1822. In March 1822, the city council appointed Casamada to replace Català<sup>36</sup> and he led the institution until its closure – along with many other institutions – at the end of the Liberal Triennium in 1823.

In his later years, Casamada survived thanks to the few university classes he was able to teach and to the money he made from private tuition at the Josep Carreras School. He died in Barcelona on 7 November 1841, leaving the memory of a man who, in the words of Carreras Bullbena, was a “distinguished public speaker, philosophical lecturer and eloquent orator”<sup>37</sup>.

## The works of Manuel Casamada

Casamada's works can be divided in three kinds of writing and the first of these is the textbook. The full title of his first, published in 1827, was *Curso elemental [sic] de elocuencia por D[on] M[anuel] C[asamada] y C[omella] P[rebero]*<sup>38</sup> ('Elementary course in eloquence by D[on] M[anuel] C[asamada] y C[omella] P[rebero]'), the introduction to which acknowledges use of the textbooks written by Hugh Blair, Antoni de Campmany and Francisco Sánchez, even while it also proposes that these works have no adequate teaching methodology for the youngest students. To set this straight, Casamada organizes his own book in the form of dialogues between a teacher and a disciple, where the disciple asks and the teacher answers in language that remains clear to the reader, even if that clarity sometimes oversimplifies the subject matter. As for the subject matter, this first book is a summary of the essential ingredients in rhetoric and the discursive arts, accompanied by practical considerations and glosses on history.

In 1828, Casamada published his second textbook, *Curso elemental [sic] de poesía por D[on] M[anuel] C[asamada] y C[omella] P[rebero]*<sup>39</sup> ('Elementary

36 Historical Archive of the City of Barcelona. City Council of the House of Bourbon, Book of Agreements, 2, 2 March 1822, f. 484. Casamada accepts the position of Academy director. Jordi Roca Vernet writes as follows: “The city council used the Academy to persuade the militant population to adopt a moderate interpretation of the Constitution of 1812. To all purposes and effects, it used the Academy to direct and shape the manner in which Barcelona's militant front interpreted the new political system”, *Política, liberalisme i revolució*. p.161.

37 Josep Rafel Carreras Bullbena, *Estudis biogràfics...*, 2, p. 379.

38 Barcelona: José Torner Press, 1827, 248 p.

39 Barcelona: José Torner Press 1828. 386 p.

course in poetry by D[on] M[anuel] C[asamada] y C[omella] P[rebero]'), which adopted the format of the previous book, using dialogues to illustrate the subjects addressed. Again, an introductory note describes the shortcomings of the various books already available in this subject area, including those of Juan Díaz Rengifo, Francisco Masdeu, Hugh Blair and Francisco Sánchez. And finally in this category, we have Casamada's third textbook, *Curso de gramática latina: según el método de las gramáticas de las lenguas vivas*<sup>40</sup> ('Course in Latin grammar using the method of grammars addressing living languages').

The second kind of writing that Casamada produced was the sermon. This is where his early eighteenth-century *moderantismo* and commitment to the liberal cause in often difficult times become most evident. In the literature, the full titles of four such texts are recorded as follows:

the sermon of 1815 titled *Barcelona victoriosa por su fidelidad contra los enemigos extranjeros y por su lealtad contra los traidores domésticos: discurso que en 28 de mayo de 1815, primer aniversario y cumpleaños de su libertad, dixo en la iglesia de PP. carmelitas descalzos el R.P. Fr. Manuel de Casamada* ('Barcelona Victorious in the Integrity of its Resistance to Enemies from Abroad and Traitors at Home: Sermon delivered by the Reverend Father Fray Manuel de Casamada on the 28 of May 1815 in the Church of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the city's freedom');

the sermon of 1820 (see Footnote 23 above) titled *Tributo de gratitud a las víctimas del Dos de Mayo de 1808 cuya sangre sentó la primera piedra del santuario de nuestra independencia, y cuyas cenizas levantaron las paredes del santuario de nuestra libertad. Elogio fúnebre que en el solemne aniversario decretado por las Cortes generales y extraordinarias del reino dixo la santa Iglesia de Barcelona. Por el encargo del excelentísimo Ayuntamiento Constitucional. El R. P. Fr. Manuel Casamada Mercedario, maestro en sagrada teología, director de estudios en la provincia de Cataluña y examinados sinodal del obispo de Gerona* ('In Gratitude to the Victims of the Second of May of 1808, whose Blood Set the First Stone in the Sanctuary of our Independence and whose Ashes Raised the Walls of the Sanctuary of our Freedom: Funeral elegy delivered in the Holy Church of Barcelona by order of the Most Excellent Constitutional City Council and delivered by the Reverend Father Fray Manuel Casamada, Mercedarian, Licenciante in Sacred Theology, Director of Studies of the Province of Catalonia and Synodal Examiner of the Bishop of Girona, on the solemn occasion of the anniversary of the Second of May of 1808 as decreed by the *Cortes generales* and illustrious figures of the Realm');

the sermon of 1820 titled *La constitución política de la Monarquía española base de nuestra felicidad, cuando está apoyada y sostenida por las virtudes sociales. Sermón que en la solemne acción de gracias ofreció al ser supremo la sociedad dramática de la ciudad de Barcelona por el restablecimiento del código fundamental de nuestras leyes dijo en la iglesia de los PP. Agustinos descalzos el 18 de abril de 1820 el R. P. Fr. Manuel Casamada, mercedario, maestro en sagrada teología, director de estudios en la provincia de Cataluña y examinador sinodal del Obispado de Gerona. Sale a la luz a expensas de la misma sociedad dramática*<sup>41</sup> ('The Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy, the Basis of our Wellbeing when Supported and Sustained by Social Virtues: Sermon delivered by the Reverend Father Fray Manuel Casamada, Mercedarian, Licenciante in Sacred Theology, Director of Studies of the Province of Catalonia and Synodal Examiner of the Bishop of Girona, on the 18 of April of 1820 in the Church of the Discalced Augustinian Fathers, on the solemn occasion of the thanksgiving ceremony offered to the Lord by the Dramatic Society of the City of Barcelona to celebrate the restoration of the basic code of our laws and paid for by the same Society');

and finally, the sermon of 1822 (delivered during what was still the period of the Liberal Triennium) (see Footnote 25 above) titled *El imperio de las leyes sostenido y afianzado por las víctimas del 7 de julio de 1823 en Madrid; elogio*

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41 On 19 April, the day after Casamada delivered his sermon, the newspaper the *Diario constitucional de Barcelona* carried the following text: "Let us learn from Father Manuel de Casamada, who yesterday caused us to shed so many sweet tears; let us learn from those meritorious clergymen who honour the province of Catalonia...", p. 147. And on 20 April, the same newspaper wrote this of Casamada's sermon: "The church event organized the day before yesterday by the members of the Dramatic Society of this city was especially distinguished by the Society's felicitous choice of orator. Father Casamada (Mercedarian) has truly honoured the Church, his order and the Spanish nation with the patriotic sermon that he delivered. His brilliant ideas, his defence of those ideas and the passion of his persuasive style all testify to this holy minister's knowledge of the intimate union between evangelical truths and the politics of human happiness. He clearly demonstrated that the Constitution is the organ that can assure our nation this happiness and that we are all equally bound to defend and uphold it, and his words to this effect were so well delivered that they should be printed for all and one to see. Praise to this noble cleric! The example he has set will surely be a blessing to us all and convinces us that within our regular clergy there are as many noble-minded Spanish patriots as there are in any other walk of life. The success of his sermon clearly proves that our constitutional system can be consolidated as much from the pulpit as from beyond it and that the church is a force of strength to be used. The good among us will always cherish Father Casamada and, in the noble undertaking of their thanksgiving to the Lord, the Dramatic Society could not have chosen a more dignified, passionate or articulate representative. His modesty will bear out our tribute to his talents and to his patriotic fervour and the citizens who gave us the opportunity and pleasure of hearing him will also accept this expression of our recognition." (p. 152). One month later, in its books section, the newspaper the *Diario constitucional, político y mercantil de Barcelona* announced Casamada's sermon (cf. the edition of 08/05/1820, p. 4)

*funebre, que en las solemnes essequias celebradas por el escelentísimo ayuntamiento constitucional de Barcelona el día 29 de Agosto de 1822, dijo en la Santa Iglesia Don Mauel Casamada, Presbítero, Ecsaminador sinodal del Obispado de Gerona y Director de la Academia Cívica y Escuelas reunidas de Sordo-mudos y ciegos instaladas en esta ciudad. Sale a lux por disposición del mismo Esceletísimo Ayuntamiento*<sup>42</sup> ('The Kingdom of Laws Sustained and Defended by the Victims of the Seventh of July of 1823 in Madrid: Funeral elegy delivered by Don Manuel Casamada, Presbyter, Synodal Examiner of the Bishop of Girona and Director of the Civic School and of associated Schools of this city for the deaf and dumb and for the blind, on the solemn occasion of the order of Christian funerals celebrated and hosted in the Holy Church by the Most Excellent Constitutional City Council of Barcelona on the 29 of August of 1822').

Finally we move to the third category of Casamada's literary activity, his public speeches. These are ideologically and politically oriented, written to be delivered in the gatherings like the *Tertúlia Patriòtica de Lacy*, or else literary or academic, intended for the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona.

Of the first kind, an example is cited by Joaquín de Alcántara in his column of the newspaper the *Diario Constitucional, político y mercantil de Barcelona*, which describes and then quotes from a speech Casamada gave at the *Tertúlia* on 22 November 1822. De Alcántara speaks thus: "The eloquent speech delivered at the lectern by lay cleric Casamada negotiated the difficult task of

42 In its edition of 29 August 1822, on the same day the sermon was to be delivered, the *Diario constitucional, político y mercantil de Barcelona* carried the following text: "With this intention and at ten o'clock in the morning of this day, the procession shall begin at the Town Hall, led by the Marine Guard, Presiding Justices, District Overseers and Superintendents and other such public authorities who, together with members of the Barcelona Provincial Council, shall proceed directly to the Cathedral to celebrate a solemn funeral mass and hear the sermon of Presbyter Don Manuel Casamada. The people shall then leave the Cathedral and proceed by way of *Calle del Obispo*, *Plaza de S. Jaime*, and the streets *Call, den Aviñó* and *Ancha*, walking across the *Plaza S. Francisco* to the sea wall where, as is customary on this day, the military units gathered shall fire a gun salute. The authorities shall inspect the units and then ascend to the balcony of the Casa Lonja to observe the battalion standing to attention before the Commemorative Stone of the Constitution..." (p. 3-4). Four days later (02-09-1822), the same newspaper carried a more detailed report on the event, which included this section: "Though the ideas were not new, the depiction of the crowds on the cenotaph in the Holy Church was fitting: our only reservation is that the detail of the four women mourners did not provide the striking effect that might have been achieved by other images – military trophies, for example, symmetrically arranged and ordered by a series of laurel wreaths, or other such representations of victory. For it is true that tributes to heroic events, glorious deaths or sacrifices made for one's country should not portray gloomy figures or emblems that prompt melancholy in the observer, but should seek instead to inspire his passion and make him wish to emulate what he sees. This, certainly, was the effect of the inscriptions on the four sides of the cenotaph and of the patriotic Christian speech that the presbyter Don Manuel Casamada delivered with such fierce love for his country." (p. 2)

explaining the origins of despotism. Casamada started by examining the sovereign power which had belonged to the common people in earlier periods of our history but which had been gradually taken from us. He then looked back at the War of Independence to consider examples and show how, through the war, the Spanish people had recovered their sovereignty by instituting a particular kind of constitution: a constitution which, to some degree, drew from the ancient laws of Aragon the maxim that kings cannot make countries but countries can make kings. 'In 1814,' Casamada said, 'our nation lost the rights we had shed blood for, but now that the invincible sword of [Rafael del] Riego has recovered these rights, they will never be lost again. They will give Europe its freedom and something greater still: for if we stand firm, not one of all the tyrants in the world will be able to wrest those rights from our hands – let alone a man like the Baron of Eroles, whose heart is as crooked as the eyes on his face and whose followers have been tricked. Not ever, if we decide together as Spaniards that our choice is this: Constitution or Death.' And Casamada then concluded his speech wishing long life to the Constitution, the *Cortes* and the King by the Constitution, and was embraced by the master of ceremonies, who added his own 'And long live the good ministers of the Church'."<sup>43</sup>

The foremost example of Casamada's literary and academic speeches is the *Disertación leída en la Academia de Buenas Letras en la sesión del día 31 de Marzo de 1837* (Speech read at the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres in its session of 31 of March of 1837), which addressed the differences between the notions of the beautiful and the sublime. One year later, on 18 November 1838, Casamada delivered another important speech, the *Examen crítico de las dos gramáticas castellanas publicadas por Don Vicente Salvá y Don José Maria Moralejo*<sup>44</sup> ('Critical examination of the Castilian grammars published by Don Vicente Salvá and by Don José Maria Moralejo'); but it is the speech of 1837 which we shall consider here.

As observed in the abstract of this article, Casamada's choice of subject when he wrote on the difference between the beautiful and the sublime was an indication of the influence that English liberalism had brought to bear on Catalan thought in this period, especially the works by Hugh Blair and Edmund Burke. Their reception took place on what were essentially preceptive terms – this much is evident in Casamada's textbooks on eloquence and poetry – and for this reason, the speech of 1837 distinguishes between the literary sublime and the experiential sublime. But it's also true that the sublime in preceptive

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<sup>43</sup> Edition of 25 November 1822, p. 3–4.

<sup>44</sup> Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona. Minutes of the Meetings of the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres of Barcelona. Book 2.



or instructional contexts in Spain already had a long history of its own, having originated in Longinus' *On the Sublime*, and so why is it, exactly, that Casamada's speech of 1837 can be identified as an example of the English model of aesthetics, or at least of its reception?

At one level, it's because he proposes that, in absolute terms, the sublime excludes the beautiful. This at least shows the break he has made, because in models of aesthetics in Spain –especially in neoclassical thought which in French and Spanish aesthetics dominated both poetics and literary instruction– a thread of continuity between the sublime and the beautiful had always been maintained and it was in fact that thread which eventually manifested itself in style. Indeed, in the years under discussion the first textbook on aesthetics given to Spanish university students continued to maintain this thread, its author Milà i Fontanals insisting that “notwithstanding the differences that have been established between what is in essence either beautiful or sublime, we may still consider the two as differing degrees of beauty”<sup>45</sup>. But what is interesting about Casamada's break and the speech that describes it is that he does this nine years before Milà's defence of tradition and textbook.

Milà's textbook was published in 1849 but, as we know, Casamada's speech countering traditional ideas was delivered in 1837. And to the question, more properly speaking, of whether his alternative model was Blair and Burke, the literature makes it clear that this is so<sup>46</sup>. When Casamada wrote his speech, he had both men's works in front of him and sometimes followed them so closely that his own text exactly reproduced their examples, words and ideas. When there was disagreement between the two, he generally followed Blair, although he occasionally tried a different tack. A good example here is in his treatment of the concept of terror, closely bound to this question of breaking the thread of continuity between the beautiful and the sublime. Edmund Burke was the first writer to revolutionize European aesthetics by taking the sublime –a major subject of eighteenth-century debate– and making it inseparable from terror. Hugh Blair adopted Burke's position to a point but proposed that the sublime might in fact be more totally ruled by other principles and attained by other means than terror; that it might be more properly said to derive from power and force, given that the exertion of power and force are always present in any experience we might have of the sublime, while terror is present in

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45 M[anuel] M[ilà i Fontanals], *Manual de Estética*, Barcelona: Pons Press, 1848, p. 18.

46 For further details, see Baldine Saint Giron, *Le sublime*, Desjonqueres, 2005. The author proposes that there have been four principle paradigms in the history of the literary sublime, as defined by Longinus, Vico, Burke and Kant, and she gives slightly more importance to the fact that Casamada's model broke with the previously established definition.

some but not in all. In his speech, feeling himself to be within Burke's circle of ideas, Casamada accepts Blair's correction but makes a kind of combination of the two: he decides that terror and force are both prerequisites for attaining the sublime.

Finally with regard to influences, in Blair we can also find the source of the division Casamada makes of the sublime, which he orders in different classes. It is from Blair that he takes the examples of natural landscapes (as so many others also did), the violence of the elements, the strength and power of nature, the terror of sound, the light that blinds our sight, darkness, loneliness, silence, disorder, magnanimity, the moral sublime in acts of heroism and the references to the Book of Habakkuk. On the other hand, his use of the concept of infinitude, his references to Virgil and the examples of Leviathan and Milton's Satan come from Burke.

Manuel Casamada was aware that any attempt to maintain the traditional link between the beautiful and the sublime would lead him to the conservatism of neoclassical thought –a position which was still very much alive in the poetics of his time. He knew that politically, this conservatism would only express itself in absolutist and reactionary terms, casting a shadow over the schoolbooks and literary textbooks that were intended to teach writing and the use of words; over books that somehow had to find a way of going on in time and surviving time. In the end, Casamada's discourse brought Catalan aesthetics one step further than it had previously travelled and placed it at the heart of Europe's ongoing intellectual debate.

Translation from Catalan by Barnaby Noone